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TUESDAY
MAY 4, 1954

Took the nine o'clock bus, a monstrous contraption with a trailer, the whole longer than a railroad car, to Venice. The [redacted] journey consumed only an hour. Wandered about. Lunched at the Taverna Fenice; great variety of sea food, including octopus (a delicacy but like rubber to masticate). We visited the antique dealer Barazzi's Palazzo Barbarigo. Fine stucco work and ceilings. Bought nothing. Most so-called antiques in Venice are restorations or reproductions. The superior furniture and works of art were museumed, dispersed, destroyed, looted or sold away long ago. Also visited another antique dealer who owns the wonderful Palazzo Grimani. House of a doge degraded to tawdry commerce. Bought just off Piazza San Marco a dozen silver-gilt knives, ditto forks and spoons, of 18th Century Venetian manufacture for $150. They were said to have belonged until a few days ago to the Morosini family -- that is possible. Same deception regarding Palladio as in the bookshops of Padua. Shops in Venice seem devoted to luring tourists to buy trinkets, and owners appear oblivious of intellectual and artistic history of this resplendent city. Perhaps they are right, for the eye has such transcendent beauty in stone, brick, marble, panoramas, etc., to regard, it is almost enough to absorb purely visual perceptions.

Came back by bus, reaching Abano at six o'clock. Virginia and Mary Macready arrived a little later -- having made the 330 mile trip from Rome by car today. We dined together; afterwards E. and I went to an amusing French movie, "Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot".

Tommy called me tonight to say that Randolph Burgess and Waugh (Assistant Secretary of State) were going to Luxembourg Friday to see Monnet. Jean would like me to be there also. We shall arrive in Paris Friday morning, so perhaps I can do it. Tommy says the Dutch Cabinet is still undecided on the democratic control communiqué.

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